

U.S. MARSHALS OPERATION



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U.S. MARSHALS “OPERATION FALCON” BREAKS ALL RECORDS FOR FUGITIVE ARRESTS

San Diego— Fugitive Michael J. Murphy was apprehended by Deputy U.S. Marshals from the Southern District of California and other law enforcement officers in Chula Vista on April 5, 2005 for his part in a violent home invasion robbery that occurred in Coronado last January. Murphy was just one of thousands of fugitives destined for jail during the largest fugitive apprehension operation in American history. Operation FALCON (“Federal And Local Cops Organized Nationally”), which took place from April 4th through April 10th, was an unprecedented cooperative effort among federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities. Over the course of seven days, Deputy U.S. Marshals and their law enforcement partners arrested a total of 10,340 fugitives, and cleared more than 13,800 felony warrants. More than 110 fugitives were arrested and 162 felony arrest warrants were cleared in the San Diego area.

“This was an enormous challenge that produced the largest number of arrests ever recorded by a single operation,” said U.S. Marshal David Bejarano “Locally, the Marshals share this great accomplishment with numerous federal, state, and local agencies that dedicated more than 40 officers to assist us in this seven-day apprehension effort.”

Operation FALCON focused on gang-related crimes, homicides, sexual assaults, kidnappings, unregistered sex offenders, and crimes against children and the elderly. During the week-long operation more than \$80,000 in narcotics and currency was seized in addition to 5 rifles, 6 handguns and one shotgun. Nationally, 243 guns were seized, and drugs were confiscated during 201 arrests. Task force members also arrested 154 gang members, 162 homicide suspects, and 553 sex offenders, and cleared 4,291 drug cases.

Operation FALCON coincided with the beginning of the U.S. Department of Justice's "National Crime Victims' Rights Week," the theme of which is "Justice isn't served until crime victims are." During his remarks announcing the results of Operation FALCON, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez praised the efforts of the participating agencies, noting that targeting violent criminals not only provides justice for the victims of those crimes, but also ensures safer communities. "By taking violent fugitives off the streets and putting them behind bars where they belong," said General Gonzalez, "we've honored the victims in a way never realized before and made our streets safer."

Fugitives whose cases were adopted by Operation FALCON were sought by the Marshals Service, other federal agencies, United States Attorneys, and courts at every level of government. Additionally, Operation FALCON task force members handled cases referred by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, as well as those of foreign fugitives believed to be in this country. The Marshals Service also received support from the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) at the Department of Justice. Interpol and the Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service assisted in the investigations of persons wanted by law enforcement worldwide. Sixteen foreign and international fugitives who were arrested during Operation FALCON now face deportation or extradition proceedings.

HIGHLIGHTED SAN DIEGO ARRESTS:

Arrest of Steven TEEL: TEEL was wanted by SDPD for Aggravated Assault and Mayhem after he allegedly poured hot grease on his girlfriend during an assault. Additionally, TEEL was also wanted for Parole Violation. Although TEEL fled the San Diego area, FALCON investigators developed information that he was hiding out in the Cincinnati, OH area. This national fugitive effort showed its worth as FALCON investigators in Cincinnati were able to quickly put together several teams that investigated multiple new leads. On the morning of Wednesday, April 6th, TEEL was arrested without incident by Operation FALCON investigators at a residence in Cincinnati.

Arrest of Michael James Murphy: MURPHY was wanted for his participation in a home invasion robbery that occurred in Coronado last January. A 28-year-old man was assaulted and robbed in his home during the violent incident. After MURPHY's girlfriend was released from prison, FALCON investigators established surveillance on her in hopes she would lead them to MURPHY. On Tuesday, April 5th, investigators followed the woman as she met a subject,

believed to be MURPHY, in Chula Vista. FALCON investigators converged on the scene and arrested MURPHY without incident.

International Arrests: Salvador MORALES-Cervantes, a former municipal police officer from Mexicali, Mexico, was wanted for a triple homicide in August 2001 in which one victim was his own 15 year old son. Mexican officials requested the assistance of the U.S. Marshals in locating and apprehending MORALES in the U.S. Leads were developed that indicated MORALES may have been hiding in the Houston, Texas area. That information was forwarded to FALCON investigative teams in Texas and on April 9, MORALES was taken into custody. MORALES will remain in Texas pending his immigration removal or extradition to Mexico.

Additionally, three fugitives wanted in San Diego were arrested in the Republic of Mexico and are awaiting removal back to the US.

Robert J. Finan II, the Marshals Service's Assistant Director for Investigative Services, expressed his deep appreciation to officers from every agency that participated in Operation FALCON. "I applaud the achievements of every deputy Marshal, police officer, detective, trooper, investigator, deputy sheriff, and special agent who hit the street virtually around-the-clock for seven days. Also of note is that during the course of this initiative, there were no serious incidents or serious injuries to either law enforcement officers or those who were taken into custody."

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